



An Open Letter to the residents of Jenkintown Borough from the Abington Township Police Association:

This letter is sent on behalf of the Abington Township Police Association (ATPA) in support of the Borough of Jenkintown's continued operation of its local police department to protect and serve the citizens and businesses of Jenkintown. We have become aware of a letter from Chief Thomas Scott to the members of his department informing them that their minimum staffing for night shift patrol officers (7pm-7am) has been changed to only one police officer on duty for the entire Borough of Jenkintown. This new staffing policy has already been implemented. This change is with the exception of Friday and Saturday nights where they will keep an additional officer on duty until 3am, after 3am patrol staffing would again return to one solo officer.

As an Association of sworn, municipal police officers in Montgomery County, we know how important it is to have qualified, professional, full-time police officers in our communities who know and understand the communities they serve. Over the last decade, our profession has taken great steps to enhance relationships between Police Departments and local communities. We know from our vantage point right next door that Jenkintown's Police Department has been a leader in developing strong bonds with your local community. In our opinion, there are no officers better suited to protect Jenkintown than its current experienced local police officers, and there is no legitimate reason to eliminate that exemplary service. The ATPA supports Jenkintown's Police Association and opposes any attempt to dissolve the Jenkintown Police Department or decrease their manpower at night, arguably the most dangerous time to operate as a police officer.

As a neighboring jurisdiction, the ATPA would also like to respond to reported statements that neighboring police departments could simply "take over" Jenkintown with no reduction in services: We disagree. First, as stated above, local police are best suited to protect our local communities. Second, as far as Abington is concerned, our officers and Department are already working harder than ever to serve Abington's citizens during a time when it is extraordinarily difficult to attract and retain police officers. With the recent uptick in crime and our own staffing challenges it is difficult enough to protect Abington Township with the top tier level of policing our residents and

visitors expect and deserve. To add calls for service in the Borough of Jenkintown to our present workload would be detrimental to the safety of the public in Abington, and our officers.

Our country is in the midst of an unprecedented police recruiting and retention crisis. It is the APTA's position that our local communities should be working to improve morale and working conditions for their police officers so that we can encourage young people to enter our profession and experienced officers to remain on the job. Jenkintown Police Chief's reported plans are doing exactly the opposite of this, and the plans threaten to make Jenkintown and its neighbors less safe. Because of this, the ATPA opposes any proposed reductions in staffing.

Chief Scott's plan to rely on mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments to assist in routine policing Jenkintown is unacceptable. Those agreements are in place for when a department becomes overwhelmed and/or needs assistance in an emergent situation. We believe that any decision to reduce Jenkintown's Police Department would be short sighted and dangerous, for Jenkintown and neighboring communities. We ask the citizens of Jenkintown to tell your elected officials who are supposed to serve YOU to protect and preserve your local police department.